FEAR THE DARK

Nostalgic Dungeon Crawl

THE ADVENTURERS

issue 5 : new characters sheets

Introduction

With issue 5, this fanzine continues to present a set of additional rules which aim to make the game last longer, funnirer and slightly crunchier (without drifting too far from its original simplicity).
In this issue you'll find four new characters sheets which allow your players to pick up the old heroes miniatures giving them a new life. These characters, though, are not born "heroes" but "adventurers".

Spirit

Fear the Dark is all about adventurers, and exploration. In the next pages you will find everything you need to make HeroQuest a real, long lasting, dungeon crawler system. The first thing that comes to mind, when thinking of adventurers and dungeon crawling, is that characters venture in dark and dangerous dungeons to find treasures, and with treasures come experience and improvements.
These improvements are something to look forward to; characters start weak and may have to retreat from missions which are too dangerous. They cannot face any kind of threat from the start - but players know that their characters can become stronger in time, and this makes up for their early struggles.

Random Dungeons

These new characters sheets can be used in any of your adventures, but work the best when coupled with the random dungeon generation system which was published in issue number 4.

Advancements

Something that was missing in the original HeroQuest is an advancement system; something that would allow players to make their characters better adventure after adventure. Sure, there were treasures to find and equipment to buy, but that was all. There was nothing to make the barbarian stronger or the wizard wiser, and this is why the new characters sheets have a built-in advancement system which takes up a good fraction of their space.

Experience

The advancement system is built to be as simple as possible. There are no calculations to be made, no points to track. Experience (XP) is tracked by simply making an "x" inside empty circles "o". When a character gains enough XP to unlock a new feature, it is graphically clear because they filled a line of "o" with "x". And at that point, they **unlock a new feature** of their character.

Marking Experience

Mark one XP (make an "x" inside an empty "o") every time a character **finds a 100 gold treasure**, and every time they **complete a mission succesfully**. The XP circle is marked **only** when the value of the single treasure card is (at least) 100 gold (minor treasures do not count). This rewards pushing forward towards the end goal of a mission, and looking for valuable treasures (taking additional risks with wandering monsters or traps).

ENCUMBRANCE

Another important feature of any dungon crawler is tracking encumbrance, so that the adventurers have some kind of a limit in what they can transport, and have to make hard choices about what to carry, or sacrifice speed.

Encumbrance rule

There is no calculation needed: each adventurer can carry **up to a certain number of cards** (8 for Barbarian and Dwarf, 6 for Elf and Wizard). If they carry more than that, their movement speed is **reduced to 2d3** instead of 2d6. The number of cards limits the choices between weapons and armors, and adventurers must always leave space for treasures; **treasure cards** (or artifacts, or other gear) count towards the limit of 8 or 6. Only spell cards **do not count** for encumbrance, because they are not physical items.

Encumbrance explained

This system aims to simplify things. Of course a certain armor weights more than another, a certain weapon more than another, treasures of lower value would reasonably weight less, etc. Instead, the systems counts everything as the same: if you want a rational explanation you can imagine that armor is cumbersome even when lighter, that weapons must have a sheath and be carried with care, that general items require attention when packing them, and treasures of low value may be made up by numerous low value coins or jewels, making them heavier, while high value treasures may be made up of more precious items, making them weight the same.

Maximum encumbrance

This is rarely necessary, but if you want, you can enforce an additiona rule, in agreement with the players: carrying more than double the limit of cards (16 for Barbarian and Dwarf, 12 for Elf and Wizard) is **not allowed**.

THIS FANZINE

FEAR the Dark is a fanzine dedicated to HeroQuest - the popular fantasy board game of the 90s which introduced so many of us to dungeon crawling and miniatures.

CREDITS

HeroQuest is once again a Hasbro trademark. This fanzine claims no ownership of the aforementioned trademark, and is instead a personal project made available to the public as a tribute to the old game.
The cover and back cover images are pictures of some of my miniatures.
The idea of a booklet for each hero with XP and features is derived from Apocalypse world, by Vincent Baker.

Barbarian

You are the Barbarian, the greatest warrior of all. But beware of magic, for your sword is no defense against it.

Attack Dice	Defend Dice	Starting Points	
		Body	Mind
2	**2**	**8**	**2**

Weapons	Armors	Movement	Other
Broadsword **3** attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	**2d6**	_____ ____ _____
_____ ____ attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	_____ *Mov. penalty*	_____ ____ _____

Equipment & Treasure

You can carry up to 8 cards (of any kind); if you carry more, move at 2**d3** speed

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Body Points ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Mind Points

Experience

Mark an XP circle when you find a 100 gold treasure or complete a mission successfully. Unlock a feature when you marked all XP circles next to it. You must complete two features in a level, before you can start any feature on the next level. You may have no more than 2 features for each level.

Level 1

x — You have a better weapon, a **broadsword**, which grants 3 attack dice *(you have this feature from the start).*

Level 2

o o o o o — Your **courage** gives you +1 to your attack die; all weapons in the game attack with 1 dice more than written

o o o o o o — Your **reflexes** give you +1 to your defend die; add this bonus to the basic 2 or to any armor you may wear

o o o o o o o — Your **long reach** allows you to attack diagonally, regardless of the weapon you're using

Level 3

o o o o o — When you attack, thanks to your **stength** you hit also on a roll of a black shield, but only if you carry no shield

o o o o o o — When you defend, thanks to your **speed** you defend also on a roll of a black shield, but only if you wear no armor

o o o o o o o — You've been **hardened by many battles**; add +1 to your starting Body Points

o o o o o o o o — You're **trained for war**: when you kill an enemy, you may make a 2nd (and last) attack against another within range

Level 4

o o o o o — Your **bravery** inspires; any other adventurer fighting with 2 sq. of you, gains +1 attack die

o o o o o o — Your **resistence** allows you, once per adventure, to restore 2 Body points; from that moment you move at 1d6 speed

o o o o o o o — You are so **huge** than you can carry more than others; you can have up to 10 cards before the move penalty of 1d6

o o o o o o o o — Your **strength** (req. level 3 strength) inflicts 2 body points damage when rolling a black shield on attacks, but only if you carry no shield

Quests Completed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

DWARF

You are the Dwarf. You are a good warrior and have the unique ability to disarm traps without a tool kit. To do so, you must avoid rolling a black shield on a combat die.

Attack Dice	Defend Dice	Starting Points	
		Body	Mind
2	**2**	**7**	**3**

Weapons	Armors	Movement	Other
Shortsword **2** attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	**2d6**	_____ ____ _____
_____ ____ attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	_____ *Mov. penalty*	_____ ____ _____

Equipment & Treasure

Y ou can carry up to 8 cards (of any kind); if you carry more, move at 2**d3** speed

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Body Points ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Mind Points

Experience

Mark an XP circle when you find a 100 gold treasure or complete a mission successfully. Unlock a feature when you marked all XP circles next to it. You must complete two features in a level, before you can start any feature on the next level. You may have no more than 2 features for each level.

Level 1

x	You have the ability to **disarm traps** without a tool kit. To do so, you must avoid rolling a black shield *(you have this feature from the start).*

Level 2

o o o o o	Your **resistence** allows you, once per adventure, to restore 2 Body points; from that moment you move at 1d6 speed
o o o o o o	Your **knowledge of architecture** allows you to search for traps and secret doors together, as a single action
o o o o o o o	Your hate for green monsters (goblin, orc, fimir, or others alike) grants you 1 more combat die when you attack them

Level 3

o o o o o	You've been **hardened by many battles**; add +1 to your starting Body Points
o o o o o o	Your **toughness** give you +1 to your defend die; add this bonus to the basic 2 or to any armor you may wear
o o o o o o o	Your **strength** gives you +1 to your attack die; all weapons in the game attack with 1 dice more than written
o o o o o o o o	When you would spring an undetected trap, roll a combat die: on a white shield your **knowledge of traps** allows you to spot it at the last moment and to decide if to stop your move

Level 4

o o o o o	When you defend, thanks to your **training** you can roll +2 defend dice when using a shield, instead of just +1
o o o o o o	When you defend, thanks to your **training** you defend also on a roll of a black shield, but only if you wear metal armor
o o o o o o o	When you attack, thanks to your **stength** you hit also on a roll of a black shield, but only with an axe or a warhammer
o o o o o o o o	You're an **expert of barricades**; if there is furniture in the room, you can use it to block an open door, which now counts as closed. Only adventurers may open the door again

Quests Completed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

ELF

You are the Elf, a master of both magic and the sword. You must use both well if you are to triumph. You have the power to cast 3 magical spells, all relating to one natural element.

Attack Dice	Defend Dice	Starting Points	
		Body	Mind
2	**2**	**6**	**4**

Weapons	Armors	Movement	Other
Shortsword **2** attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	**2d6**	_____ ____ _____
_____ ____ attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	_____ *Mov. penalty*	_____ ____ _____

Equipment & Treasure

You can carry up to 6 cards (excl. speels); if you carry more, move at 2**d3** speed

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Body Points ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Mind Points

Experience

Mark an XP circle when you find a 100 gold treasure or complete a mission successfully. Unlock a feature when you marked all XP circles next to it. You must complete two features in a level, before you can start any feature on the next level. You may have no more than 2 features for each level.

Level 1

x — You have the power to cast 3 magical spells, all relating to one natural element *(you have this feature from the start).*

Level 2

o o o o o — Your **reflexes** give you +1 to your defend die; add this bonus to the basic 2 or to any armor you may wear

o o o o o o — Your keen **elf senses** allow you, just once per adventure, to ask the GM to place monsters and furniture in a room, without opening the door

o o o o o o o — Your **speed** allows you to move +2 steps in any of your normal movements, only if you do not carry more than 6

Level 3

o o o o o — You can use **two swords** instead of one (no shield). The 2nd sword may attack with 1 die, only against another enemy

o o o o o o — When you defend, thanks to your **speed** you defend also on a roll of a black shield, but only if you wear no armor

o o o o o o o — Your **agility** allows you to move over furniture or enemies, once per room/corridor (and once again if you return to it)

o o o o o o o o — **Elf Medicine**: in your turn, as an action, you can spend 3 Mind points to restore up to 3 Body points to yourself or another adventurer

Level 4

o o o o o — Your **long reach** allows you to attack diagonally, regardless of the weapon you're using

o o o o o o — Your **ability** gives you +1 to your attack die; all weapons in the game attack with 1 dice more than written

o o o o o o o — When you attack, thanks to your **skills** you hit also on a roll of a black shield, but only if you carry no shield

o o o o o o o o — You can push your **magical skills** to the limit; spend 3 Mind points and recover a spell that you already used. You can now use it again in this adventure

Quests Completed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

WIZARD

You are the Wizard. You have the power to cast many different spells, In combat, however, you are weak. You cannot wear armor or use large weapons. You must cast your spells wisely and avoid physical combat.

Attack Dice	Defend Dice	Starting Points	
		Body	Mind
1	**2**	**4**	**6**

Weapons	Armors	Movement	Other
Dagger **1** attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	**2d6**	_____ ____ _____
_____ ____ attack dice	_____ ____ defend dice	_____ *Mov. penalty*	_____ ____ _____

Equipment & Treasure

You can carry up to 6 cards (excl. speels); if you carry more, move at 2**d3** speed

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Body Points ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Mind Points

Experience

Mark an XP circle when you find a 100 gold treasure or complete a mission successfully. Unlock a feature when you marked all XP circles next to it. You must complete two features in a level, before you can start any feature on the next level. You may have no more than 2 features for each level.

Level 1

x — You have the power to cast 9 magical spells, relating to three natural element, but you cannot wear armor or use large weapons *(you have this feature from the start).*

Level 2

o o o o o — Magic gives you a **glimpse of the future**: spend 2 Mind points to re-roll a single die you just rolled

o o o o o o — Convert your magical energy in a **blast of light**; spend 2 Mind points to attack with 2 dice a target in sight

o o o o o o o — You can push your **magical skills** to the limit; spend 3 Mind points and recover a spell that you already used. You can now use it again in this adventure

Level 3

o o o o o — Spend 2 Mind points for a **magical shield**: grants +1 defend die to the target until the end of the next combat

o o o o o o — Convert a spell in **healing energy**; discard an unused spell to heal 2 Body points to yourself or an adjacent target

o o o o o o o — Convert a spell in an **energy attack**; discard an unused spell to attack with 3 dice a target in sight

o o o o o o o o — Spend 2 Mind points for an **invisible servant**; the spirit will carry 4 cards for you until the end of the adventure

Level 4

o o o o o — Spend 2 Mind points to **enchant a weapon** until the end of the next combat; the weapon rolls +1 attack die

o o o o o o — Convert your **blood in magical energy**: recover 2 Mind points at the price of spending 2 of your Body points

o o o o o o o — Spend 4 Mind points to **bend time and space**: when you declare this you take a full additional turn with regular actions (even in the middle of the GM's turn)

o o o o o o o o — Spend 2 Mind points to **block an enemy casting an evil spell**: you both roll a d6 and the highest prevails. If you fail, lose another 1 Mind point and the evil spell works normally, otherwise you block it and the enemy looses 1 Mind point

Quests Completed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

Summary of the Original Rules

This is a summary of the original rules; new original rules are presented in dark red color.

† Turn

Default order: Barbarian, Dwarf, Elf, Wizard, Game Master (GM).

Movement and Action

In a turn, you may move and then act, or act and then move. You cannot make an action in the middle of a movement. Actions are:

† Attack	† Search for treasure	† Search for traps
† Cast a spell	† Search for secret doors	† Disarm a trap

Looking

Looking is **not** one of the basic actions. It happens automatically as heros move. Everything in their **line of sight** must be placed on the board.

Doors

If a hero stops next to a closed door, they can ask the GM to open it, and place on the board the content of the room. Opening doors does **not** count as an action; it's a part of the normal movement. Open doors **cannot** be closed. **Double doors** open both sides together, making passage easier.

Movement rules

A hero can move less of the 2d6 roll, and pass other heroes if allowed by the other player. It is **not allowed** to move diagonally, through walls, through blocked squares (walls), over adversaries, or backwards in the same turn. It is **not allowed** to end a move sharing a square (exception: this is allowed on stairs and in pits).

† Attack

You may attack an adjacent enemy, **not** diagonally. Some weapons allow to attack from a distance or diagonally, or change the number of dice to roll. An attack scores **one hit** for every Skull rolled. One attack per Turn is allowed.

Defend

The defendant rolls its Defend dice, and blocks one hit for every **white shield** if it's a hero defending, or for every **black shield** if it's a monster defending. Roll the Defend dice every time someone attacks you.

Body Points

Every hit not blocked, is subtracted from the Body points. When they reach **zero**, the hero or monster is **dead** (a hero may drink a potion already in their possession or use a healing spell if they have not already made an action).

† Cast a Spell

A spell requires a **visible** target. After casting the spell, **discard** the spell card and the same spell cannot be used until the next quest. The line of sight is **blocked** by walls, closed doors, and other miniatures (heroes or monsters).

† Search for treasure

Treasures are **only in rooms**, not in corridors. Every hero may search independently on their turn, and only once by each hero for each room. You may search for treasure only when the room is **empty** of enemies.

Treasure deck

If there is no special treasure declared by the Quest Book, shuffle the Treasure deck and draw a random Treasure card. Valuable treasure cards remain in possession of the hero, while other cards are returned to the deck.

Wandering monster

Place it next to the searcher, and attack immediately. From the next turn, the monster moves and attacks normally. If there is no space, place it anywhere in the room, without making an attack.

† Search for secret doors

Secret doors may be **in rooms or corridors**. Every hero may search independently on their turn, in the room or corridor they're in. You may search for secret doors only when the room or corridor is **empty** of enemies. No need to search more than once: **all** secret doors in the room or corridor are revealed as soon as the first hero searches for them. Secret doors are **closed** until a hero opens them, and work as normal doors.

† Search for traps

Traps may be in **rooms, corridors, or chests/furniture**. You may search for traps only when the room or corridor is **empty** of enemies. If there are traps, the GM will tell you what they are and where they are.

Trigger a trap

If a hero moves on a trap square, without checking, the trap is triggered. If a hero searches for treasures, without checking, the chest/furniture trap is triggered. Monsters do not trigger hidden traps.

† Disarm a trap

To disarm a trap you must possess the **appropriate tool kit**; the Dwarf on the other hand may do this even without tools. A hero must announce the attempt and move to the trap square, then roll 1 Combat die. If you roll a Skull, you trigger the trap and suffer its consequences; any other roll means you disarmed the trap and it's gone forever. The Dwarf fails and triggers the trap only when rolling a black shield.

† Traps rules

Here is the list of the default traps, how they can be avoided or disarmed, and what happens if they are triggered by the heroes.

Pit traps

This is declared as a weak floor by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, suffer 1 Body point damage and fall into the pit, ending your turn; place a **pit trap tile** on the board, which cannot be removed. The pit may only be jumped at this point. **In the pit**, a hero may search for treasure or secret doors as if in a room. Attack and Defend rolls are done with one die less (but not less than one, and this applies also to monsters). A hero or monster may move out of the pit in the next turn.

Falling Block trap

This is declared as a dangerous looking ceiling by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, roll 3 attack dice and inflict 1 Body point of damage on each Skull; the **falling block tile** is placed on the board and becomes a permanent block which cannot be removed. The hero must decide in which direction to make a last step (ahead or back), before the turn ends.

Spear trap

This is declared as suspicious by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, roll 1 attack die and inflict 1 Body point of damage on a Skull. This ends the hero turn. When triggered once, a spear trap is gone and nothing is placed on the board.

Chest/Furniture trap

This is declared as looking suspicious by the GM, and may be **disarmed**. It is also avoided by not searching for treasures. If disarmed, it is possible to look for treasures without triggering traps. If triggered, follow its instructions.

Jump a trap or a pit

You may jump traps which have not been triggered, or may jump an open pit. You cannot jump over a fallen block: this is like a blocking wall. To jump, you must have enough movement left to end in the square after the trap; if you do, roll 1 Combat die. If you roll a Skull, you trigger the trap (or fall into the pit) and suffer its consequences; any other roll means you avoided the trap or pit.

† Encumbrance

A hero can carry just a limited amount of cards (of equipment treasures, but not counting spells). If they carry more, they move at 1d6 speed instead of the regular 2d6. Discarding items allow to return to normal movement. Barbarian and dwarf can carry up to 8 cards each, elf and wizard up to 6 cards each.

† Experience

An hero marks an XP circle when finding a 100 gold treasure or completing a mission successfully.

† Monsters Rules

Fear of the Undead

When placing an undead (skeleton, zombie, mummy) on the board, or a group of them, the GM rolls a combat die. If the GM rolls a skull, the undead(s) may move and attack now, before any other hero's action. Then the game resumes normally.

Use the rule **the first time for each type** of undead (skeleton, zombie, mummy), **per quest** (skeletons cause fear the first time they appear, then no more until next quest; zombies cause fear the first time, etc.).

Large Monster's Initiative

When an hero **ends the move next to a large or terrible monster**, the GM rolls 2 combat dice. On each skull, the monster inflicts 1 Body point damage to the hero, before the hero can attack. The hero rolls the Defend dice normally and negates 1 Body point damage for each white shield rolled.

Your Rules

Use this space to make notes about your own rules, so that you have a written record for you and the players.

FEAR the Dark is a fanzine dedicated to HeroQuest - the popular fantasy board game of the 90s. It's a complete reboot of the game; faithful to the original rules but with a new feeling to it. The 'zine will contain new quests, suitable to new players and to veteran players as well.

The fanzine is hosted at www.daimongames.com/heroquest
Comments, suggestions, collaborations: davide.pignedoli@gmail.com

Issue number 5 – June 2021:

† A short introduction
† New characters sheets for each adventurer: barbarian, dwarf, elf, wizard
† A simple experience system
† Advancements for each adventurer
† A simple encumbrance system with movement penalty